

The State of Maryland



Proclamation

From the Governor of the State of Maryland

INTERNATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MONTH SEPTEMBER 2023

WHEREAS, In recognition of Maryland as the most powerful destination for authentic Underground Railroad history and in commemoration of The Year of Harriet Tubman, celebrating the 201st birthday of the Underground Railroad's most famous conductor, who self-emancipated on September 17th, 174 years ago; and

WHEREAS, Enslaved Africans, their descendants in bondage, and other unfree laborers who resisted their status to gain freedom through acts of self-emancipation, all known as freedom seekers, and those who assisted along the way, united together to become what is known as the Underground Railroad; and

WHEREAS, The quest for freedom began in 1619 at Ft. Monroe, Virginia when more than 20 enslaved Africans arrived and were traded as property; and

WHEREAS, Political and moral forces eventually led to the first steps in abolishing slavery by the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, first issued five days following the Battle of Antietam on September 17th, 161 years ago; and

WHEREAS, States and entities across the country have embraced and designated the month of September as International Underground Railroad Month, recognizing the courage and determination of the enslaved prior to and beyond emancipation as well as the expansive but clandestine network of assistance engaged in a dangerous yet determined quest for freedom; and

WHEREAS, In appreciation of freedom as a commitment to recognize the power of our diverse stories while never losing sight of our common bonds as Americans, and as we move toward the 250th anniversary of this country, we must unite in our drive to achieve a more perfect union; we must work to grow; and we must accept our responsibility to confront and eliminate barriers which threaten the administration of justice and America's true greatness.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, do hereby proclaim SEPTEMBER 2023 as INTERNATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MONTH in Maryland and do thereby encourage all to honor SEPTEMBER 1-30, 2023 and beyond, as a period of reflection, cultural and public education, earnest assessment, and planning to invite, imagine, involve, and inspire all to cherish and respect equality and freedom to all.

*Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland,
this 1st day of September
Two Thousand and twenty-three*

Wes Moore
Governor

Dwaine Miller

St. Governor

Heaven E. Lee

Secretary of State

